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10 February 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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4. Notes: Uganda; [REDACTED] NATO-Greece-Turkey;

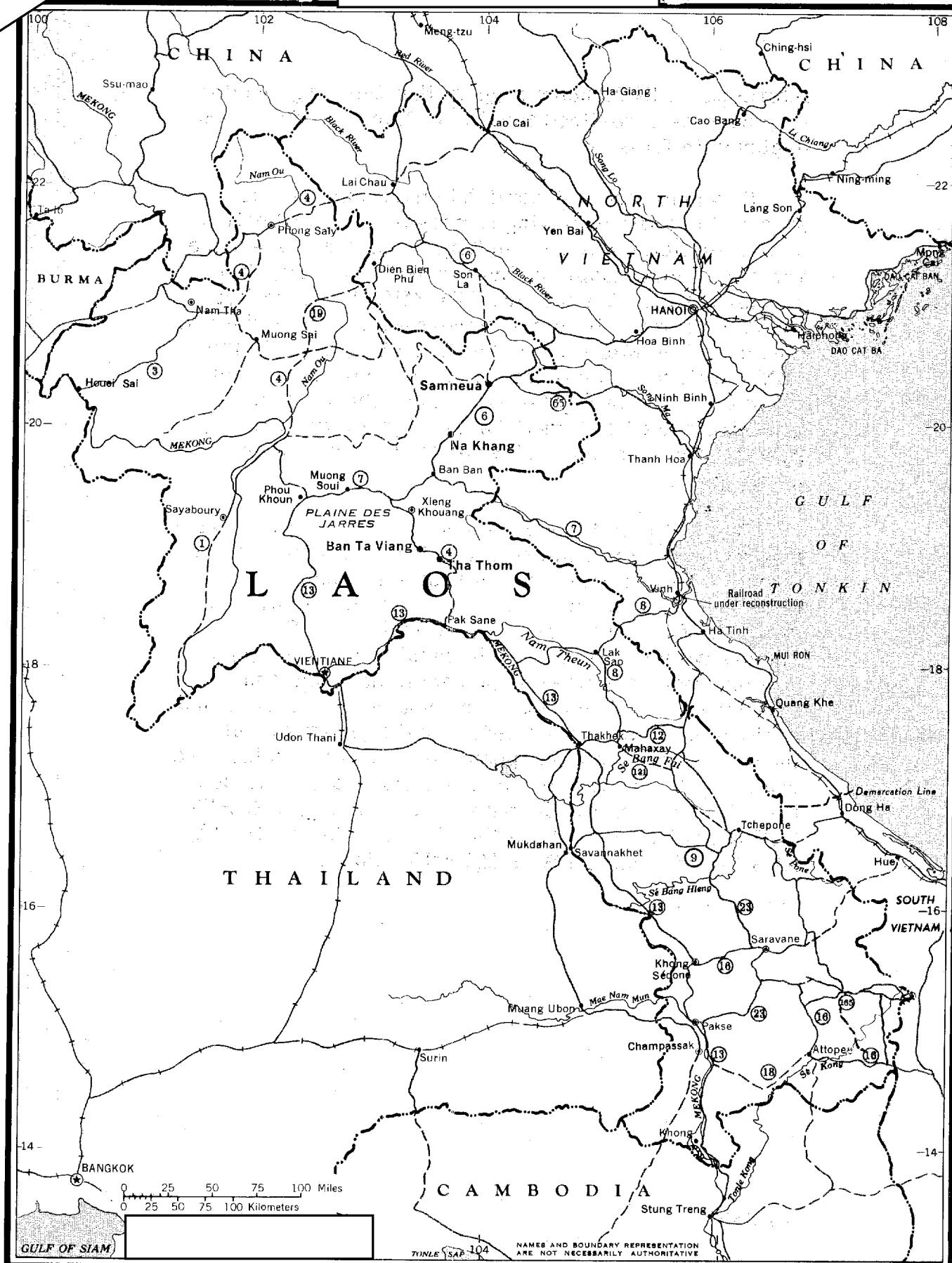
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[REDACTED] Belgium; [REDACTED]
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10 Feb 66 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Map

Laos: The Communists are increasing pressure against several government positions in northern Laos.

In the Samneua area, a government battalion suffered 18 killed and 24 wounded before withdrawing on 6 February from a defensive position a few miles north of Na Khang, a key government position astride Route 6. Government reinforcements are being brought into Na Khang in preparation for a counter-attack.

Communist forces, reportedly including several battalions of North Vietnamese troops, have had only limited success in their efforts over the past year to clear pockets of government guerrillas from the Route 6 area. Their objective apparently is to open Route 6 as another supply route to the Plaine des Jarres.

[Farther south, the situation in the area of Ban Ta Viang and Tha Thom remains unclear following the desertion of substantial numbers of government troops last week. Thus far, the Communists have made only a limited attempt to take advantage of confusion and gaps in the government's defensive positions. New government troops are being brought into the area, and it appeared yesterday that friendly forces had reoccupied Tha Thom, from which they had withdrawn earlier.]

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Turkey: The political temperature in Turkey is beginning to rise, and there are new rumors of dissension within the military.

The four-month-old government of Prime Minister Demirel is under strong pressure from its political opposition, which appears intent on creating a crisis atmosphere. There is also a continuing split within Demirel's own Justice Party (JP), but this does not now appear to constitute a serious threat to his control.

The Demirel government has done fairly well since taking office last November with a promise to promote economic development and to restore domestic political peace. It has lately aroused criticism, however, by proposing a new electoral bill that the opposition fears would help perpetuate JP control of the government. A proposed bill on political amnesties has sparked controversy, and is being exploited by the opposition to build tension between the government and the military.

[Opposition to the Demirel regime is alleged to be especially strong among junior officers of the Turkish Air Force. If the political opposition succeeds in provoking a crisis, dissidents within the military might be encouraged to take action against the government.]

Barring a new crisis over Cyprus or over a successor to the ailing President Gursel, the government will face its next serious test late this month when the annual budget comes up for final approval. The budget vote traditionally provides the parliamentary opposition with its best opportunity to attack all aspects of the government's program.

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NOTES

Uganda: Kampala remains tense, and continued reports of a possible military coup have sent most government ministers out of town or into hiding. The interior minister told a US Embassy officer yesterday that the threatened military action reflected a rivalry between two army factions and was not a challenge to the present civilian leadership. The government has taken all necessary precautions, but in the highly charged atmosphere a move by either faction is still possible.

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NATO-Greece-Turkey: Several NATO countries are reluctant to move forward on defense aid promised to Greece and Turkey as long as the two are unwilling to settle differences over Cyprus. Secretary General Brosio has suggested that NATO make its aid to the two countries contingent on their making progress toward settling the dispute. This could result in strong negative reactions in both countries, where there are already opposition elements highly critical of NATO.

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Belgium: The Harmel government seems unlikely to survive a parliamentary debate on medicare scheduled to begin today. Socialist Foreign Minister Spaak has canceled his scheduled 10 February trip to Moscow and is trying to keep the government together. A majority of the Socialist deputies, however, reportedly want to bring the government down and fight a new election on the medicare issue.

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